مَعْنى:

لا إله إلا اللّه

رسالة لشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب

The Meaning of: La ilaha ila Allah

By Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab

ابوذر

مَعْنى لا إله إلا الله
The Meaning of La ilaha ila Allah

In this treatise, al-Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (rahimahullah) clarifies the meaning of the kalima, and elaborates on the differences between the Muslimin & Mushrikin in every time period.

The points the author addresses are:

[1] - The Importance of understanding the Kalima
[2] - The Shahadah is both a negation and an affirmation
[3] - The Arab pagans affirmed tawhid ar-rububiyyah
[4] - Anyone who doesn’t make uluhiyyah for Allah is a kafir
[5] - The mushrikin in our time are worse than before

There will be “[note]:” sections when there is an issue where the meaning needs to be explained in more detail, as just translating some parts of the text verbatim will confuse the reader.

May Allah make this of benefit, Ameen.

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[Important terminology to understand]:

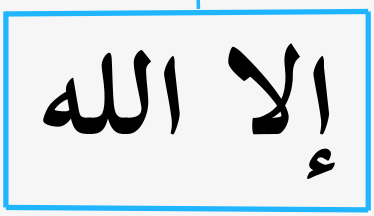
~ tawhid al-uluhiyyah: is that your actions, deeds, and all the different kinds of worship are for Allah alone. For example, make du'a to Allah alone would be an act of uluhiyyah, likewise: slaughtering, praying, fighting for, seeking legislation from, and so on. It's often translated as "the oneness of worship".

~ tawhid ar-rububiyyah: is that you affirm that Allah is the Creator, Sustainer, and Provider for everything in existence. That He is in control. Basically, tawhid ar-rububiyyah is that you affirm that Allah is one in His actions. It's commonly translated as "The oneness of Lordship".

~ Wali (plural - Awliya): People who are close to Allah due to piety, due to constant worship, etc. (can also mean guardian, but not in this context). And wilayah, is a term used to mean the friendship between the 'wali' and Allah تعالى

There is no god worthy of worship except Allāh:

- "ila Allāh" (except Allāh) - is an affirmation that Allah is the only mʿabūd in existence, and also an affirmation in our belief in Him
- This is referred to al-ithbāt (the affirmation), and is also referred to as "al-īmānu billāh"



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- "La ilāha" (there is no god worthy of worship) is a negation of all kinds of worship for anything other than Allāh
- This is refer to as an-Nafī (the negation), and this is also referred to as "al-kufr bit-ṭāghūt"

[what is intended by saying *La ilāha ilā Allāh*]:

Know, may Allāh have mercy on you, that this statement is the distinction between kufr and Islam, it is the statement of piety, the most trust worthy hand-hold, and that which Ibrahim (*ʿalayhis-salām*) made to remain in his descendants - so that they may return to the truth.

And it is not intended to be said on tongue with ignorance of it's meaning: for the munāfiqīn say it, and they're still beneath the kuffār in the deepest pits of hellfire - even if they prayed and were charitable. Rather, it is intended to be said with understanding of it's meaning in the heart, with love for it, with love for it's people, and with hatred towards anything that contradicts it or opposes it. Just as the Prophet (*ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*) said: "**Whoever says: 'La ilāha ilā Allāh' sincerely..** "(1), and in another narration: "**..sincerely from his heart..**"(2), and in another narration: "**...truthfully from his heart...**"(3), and in another ḥadīth: "Whoever says: '**La ilāha ilā Allāh' and disbelieves in everything worshiped besides Allāh..**", as well as other than that from the various aḥādīth which indicate the ignorance of many people regarding this testimony.

So know - that this kalimah is both a negation and an affirmation. A negation of divinity for anything other than Allāh, negating it from all the Messengers - even Muḥammad (*ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*), also negating divinity for all the angels - even from Jibril, and other than them from the ʾawliyā and ṣāliḥīn (righteous people). When you're able to grasp this concept, then you should also contemplate the ʾulūhiyyah which Allāh affirmed for Himself, and negated that Muḥammad, Jibrīl, and other than them should be given even a mustard's seed worth of worship!

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[1] - ṣaḥīḥ al-būkharī, kitāb al-ʿilm (99)
[2] - Aḥmad (5/229.)
[3] - ṣaḥīḥ Muslim al-īmān (23), Aḥmad (6/394)

When you have come to realize this - you should then know that this ʾulūhiyyah is what the general people of our time refer to as “the secret” (as-sirr) and “the friendship” (al-wilāyah), and the “ilah” (according to them) is whom they call “walī”, beliving that he posseses a secret of the unseen, and whom they also call “faqīr”, “shaykh”, and whom the general people call “as-Sayyid” (master), and other titles similar to this.

[note]: Some of the Mushrikīn - claimants of Islām - from the ṣūfis, they believe that their walīs, shuyukh, and leaders have something called as-sirr, which translates to “the secret”. They believe that this “secret” is some other worldly “power” that Allāh gives to certain people because they are close to Him. Their (incorrect) concept of wilāyah is similar to this. They use these concepts to justify making du’a to these ‘awliya’, sacrificing for them, etc. So, when the Shaykh (رحمه الله تعالى) said “and the ‘ilah’ (according to them) is the walī..”, it means that they’ve put their shaykh on the same level of a god, praying to him, and making the walī to be an intermediary between the person making du’a and Allāh.

They engage in this behavior because they think Allāh (the Highest) has given the elite of His creation a special status. And they think that He is pleased with the people seeking protection from them, having hope in them, seeking aid in them, and turning them into intermediaries between Allāh & His slaves. Thus, those whom the people of shirk deem to be intermediaries - are what their predecessors used to call gods.

[note]: “those who came before”or “are what their predecessors used to call gods.” - the Shaykh (رحمه الله تعالى) is comparing the modern grave worshipers to the original Arab pagans, who used to worship idols.

Therefore, when a person says: ‘La ilāha ilā Allāh’ (there is no *ilah* worthy of worship besides Allāh) - he is negating intermediaries. If you desire to understand this with a full, complete understanding - then you will accomplish that by learning **two matters**:

[The kuffār affirm tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah in Allāh]:

[the first matter]: Understand that the kuffār whom the Messenger of Allāh fought, killed, permitted their wealth, and legalized their women - they would affirm the tawḥīd of ar-rubūbīyyah in Allāh, and that is: No one creates, sustains, gives life, causes death, or controls all affairs except Allāh alone, just as Allāh (the Highest) said:

﴿ قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْأَبْصَـٰرَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ ٱلْحَىَّ مِنَ ٱلْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَيِّتَ مِنَ ٱلْحَىِّ وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ ٱلْأَمْرَ ۚ فَسَيَقُولُونَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

“Say, ‘Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?’ They will say, ‘Allāh.’ so say, ‘Then will you not fear Him?’” [10:31]

And this matter is extremely important: you need to understand that the kuffār whom the Messenger of Allāh fought - they testified to all of this, yet they still didn’t enter into Islām, nor did it sanctify their blood, nor did it protect their wealth. They would also give charity, make ḥajj & ʿumrah, also they’d worship Allāh, and they’d even stay away from the forbidden matters out of fear of Allāh.

[the second matter]: However (even with all that) it is this 2nd matter which made them kuffār, permitted their blood to be spilled, wealth to be taken - that they did not affirm for Allah the tawḥīd al-ʾuluhiyyah, which is: to not supplicate nor hope in anything except Allāh alone without partner, to not seek aid in other than Him, and to not sacrifice for other than Him, and to not swear by other than Him - not even for an angel brought near nor a messenger that was sent.

So - whoever seeks aid in other than Him has committed kufr! And whoever sacrifices for other than Him has committed kufr! And whoever swear by other than Him has committed kufr! And likewise with similar actions.

[The mushrikūn whom the Messenger fought made du'a to the righteous - and disbelieved by this, even with their affirming tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah for Allāh]:

And the completion of this (your understanding of these 2 matters), is that you recognize that the mushrikūn whom the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) fought made du'a to the righteous such as the angels, ʿīsā, ʿuzayr, and other than them from the ʻawliya, and they committed kufr by this, even with their affirmation of Allāh being the Creator, Provider, and in complete Control - and when you have understood this, then you have understood the meaning of La ilāha ilā Allāh! And you've also realized that the one who turns to a Prophet, or an angel, or places his trust in them, or seeks help in them - then he has left the fold of Islam! And this kufr is the same exact kufr of those whom Messenger of Allāh (ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) fought against.

So, if someone from amongst the mushrikīn asks you: "We recognize Allāh to be the Creator, the Provider, and that He is in Complete Control. But, there are some righteous people who are very close to Allāh - and so we make du'a towards them, we swear by them, we enter upon them to seek aid in them, and by that we receive intercession & to be in high-esteem with Allāh, other than that - we affirm that Allāh is the Creator and in Complete Control.

Respond by saying: You words are the madhab of Abu Jahl and his like, for indeed - they made du'a to ʿīsā, ʿuzayr, the angels, and the awliya; just as Allāh (the Highest) said:

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوۡلِيَآءَ مَا نَعۡبُدُهُمۡ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلۡفَىٰٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحۡكُمُ بَيۡنَهُمۡ فِي مَا هُمۡ فِيهِ يَخۡتَلِفُونَۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهۡدِي مَنۡ هُوَ كَٰذِبٞ كَفَّارٞ ﴾

“As for those who take other lords besides Him, [saying]: ‘We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allah,’ surely Allah will judge between all regarding what they differed about. Allah certainly does not guide whoever persists in lying and disbelief.” [39:3]

And His (the Highest) saying:

﴿ وَيَعۡبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمۡ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمۡ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُفَعَٰٓؤُنَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِۚ ﴾

“And they worship other than Allāh that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allāh.’” [10:18]

When you thoroughly contemplate on this, you understand that the kuffār testified in Allāh with tawḥīd ar-rubūbīyyah, which is Him being the Creator and Provider and in Control (Allāh being alone in these actions) whilst they call upon ʿīsā, the angels, and the ‘Awliyya intending to become close with Allāh and that they’ll receive intercession before Allāh.

And you’ll also come to understand that from amongst the kuffar - especially the Christians - they will worship Allāh day and night, they have little value for materialistic worldly life, they charitably give from it is bestowed upon them, and they live away in monasteries away from the people. And even with all of this (worship and ‘good deeds’): they are disbelieving enemies of Allāh, who will remain in the fire of Hell for all eternity, the reason behind that being their belief in ʿīsā and other than him from the ‘Awliyya, how they make du’a (...)

(...) to them, sacrifice & slaughter for them, and swear by them.

The description of Islam that your Prophet (ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) came with with will become clear for you, and it will also become clear that many people are detached from it, and the meaning behind the ḥādīth, wherein the Prophet (ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: “Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange..” [4], will also become clear!

Allāh! Allāh! My brothers! Cling to the foundation of your dīn, it’s first and it’s last, it’s base and it’s head: the testimony of La ilāha ilā Allāh!

Understand it’s meaning, love it, love it’s people, make them your brothers - even if they’re far away; and disbelieve in the ṭāghūt, have enmity & hatred towards it and hate whosoever loves it or argues on it’s behalf or does not consider it and it’s followers to be disbelievers, or says: “nothing is upon me regarding them’, or says ‘Allāh has not charged me with them’ for he has lied upon Allāh and committed slander, for Allāh (the Highest) has charged him with them, and obligated upon him to reject them and dissociate from them, even if they are their brothers or children.

Allāh! Allāh! My brothers! cling to that so that you may meet your rabb while not associating any partners with him. O Allāh! Make us die as Muslims and join us with the righteous!

[The kufr of the mushrikīn in our time is worse than the kufr of those whom the Messenger of Allāh fought]:

And we end this treatise with an Ayah that Allāh mentions within His book - and it will clarify for you that the kufr of the mushrikīn in our time is greater (in kufr) than those whom were fought by the Messenger (ṣalallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam), Allāh said:

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[4] - ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ahmad

﴿ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ ٱلضُّرُّ فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَن تَدْعُونَ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا نَجَّىٰكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ كَفُورًا ﴾

“And when adversity touches you at sea, lost are [all] those you invoke except for Him. But when He delivers you to the land, you turn away [from Him]. And ever is man ungrateful.” [17:67]

Thus, Allāh (the Highest) has mentioned that when the kuffār were afflicted with harm, they abandoned their masters & ‘shaykhs’, consequently they wouldn’t make du’a to anyone from trom, nor did they seek aid in them - rather they became sincere to Allāh alone without partner, and only sought aid in Him. However, when their were in a state of well-being, they engage in shirk.

And then you see the mushrikīn from our time, perhaps some of them claim to be from the people of knowledge, zuhd (leaving worldly life), ijtihād (scholarly decision making), and ‘ibādah (worship); and even he is afflicted with harm, he stands up and seeks aid in other than Allāh, for example: ma’rūf or ‘abd al-qadir al-jilani, and those who are more noble than them, such as zayd ibn al khattab, and zubayr in al ’awam, and more noble than them, such as the messenger of Allāh , and Allāh’s aid is sought! What is graver and more horrid than that, is that they seek help from the ṭawāghīt, kuffār, and murtaddīn such as the shamsān, idrīs who is called al-ashqar - yusuf and their likes, and Allāh knows best

All praise, the first of it and the last of it, belongs to Allāh, and may Allāh send blessings upon the best of his creation - Muḥammad, and all of his family.

[end of the Shaykh’s treatise]

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